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Hispanic Policy Development Project

Volume I

Moving Into the Political Mainstream

How officials view the obstacles facing Hispanics, their opportunities, and the outlook for the 1980s

The Hispanic Policy Development Project is a non-profit organization—a 501(C)(3)—which encourages the analysis of public policies and policy proposals affecting Hispanics in the United States.

HPDP directs its efforts in particular to the problems of Hispanic youth: secondary education, employment, and access to social services. Compared to other segments of the U.S. population, the Hispanic segment is young. This youthful population is often inadequately served by schools and social service agencies, and many Hispanic young people are insufficiently trained to compete effectively in the job market. To attack these problems, HPDP supports high-level public policy commissions composed of prestigious Hispanics and non-Hispanics; conferences, seminars, and debates around central education and employment issues; both lay and professional analysis and evaluation of specific policy options; and policy analysis competitions open to Hispanic and non-Hispanic scholars as well as Hispanic organizations. HPDP places major emphasis on supporting the work of Hispanic organizations and increasing their access to policy-making networks.

The communication of policy data, recommendations, and proposals is a major part of HPDP's program. Using extensive contacts among representatives of the business and corporate world and among policy makers on both state and national levels, as well as frequent briefing sessions, conferences, and seminars, HPDP seeks to bring its findings to the attention of key groups and leaders throughout the United States. The production of publications is part of that effort.

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How Officials View the Obstacles Facing Hispanics, Their Opportunities, and the Outlook for the 1980s

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Volume I

MOVING INTO THE POLITICAL MAINSTREAM

A National Survey of Elected and Appointed Hispanic Officials

conducted by

The Public Agenda Foundation

for

The Hispanic Policy Development Project

Project Director: **Keith Melville**
Survey Research: **Harvey Lauer**

February 1984

Introduction

THE 1980s have been called "The Decade of Hispanics," and certainly the size of the Hispanic population will increase significantly. What is not so certain is whether there will be a corresponding increase in the influence of Hispanics, and real progress toward solution of the pressing problems that face Hispanics. If that is to happen, the problems must be more sharply defined, proposals to alleviate those problems must be formulated, and realistic solutions must be brought to the attention of public and private policy makers. To that end, the Hispanic Policy Development Project is implementing a program—

- To encourage development of practical proposals to deal with problems facing the Hispanic population;
- To encourage active collaboration between Hispanic and non-Hispanic leaders;
- To increase public awareness of Hispanic problems and to mobilize public influence in support of action on the part of both public and private institutions to deal with the most serious Hispanic issues;
- To increase the resources available to Hispanic organizations and individuals for the purpose of undertaking studies of public policy.

The dissemination of research findings and policy analyses is a HPDP priority. Publication of these two reports that have emerged from the 1983 poll conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation is only the beginning of a major effort which, over time, will produce a series of papers on different aspects of the Hispanic reality.

In its brief preface, below, the Public Agenda Foundation points out that its findings reflect only the opinions of a sample group of elected and appointed Hispanic officials. These are influential individuals whose views deserve to be carefully considered by Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike. But it cannot be assumed that their opinions necessarily are shared by other segments of Hispanic leadership. Nor can it be assumed that the views they express are representative of the Hispanic population as a whole. They are largely educated and successful Hispanics, and they may not reflect the attitudes of the entire Hispanic community.

Some of these findings or their interpretation may provoke disagreement and spark debate. But we feel that presenting these data and provoking debate is a healthy way to dispel stereotypes about Hispanics and to focus public attention on the obstacles that Hispanics continue to face in achieving full integration into this society.

The Public Agenda Foundation was responsible for conducting the survey and interpreting its findings, which are presented in these two reports, **Volume I, Moving Into the Political Mainstream,** and **Volume II, Moving Up to Better Education and Better Jobs.** The questionnaire and a tabulation of responses, together with a copy of the letter sent to potential respondents, can be found in the Appendix. Readers interested in looking more closely at the open-ended questions or in examining the computer printout are invited to query HPDP.

There are many other sources of reliable data about Hispanics. Readers looking for additional information are directed to the list of organizations in the Appendix at the end of this report. The list is by no means all-inclusive, and provides only a starting point for people who want to learn more about Hispanics.

For more information about HPDP's activities and publications, send your request, together with your name and address, to—

The Hispanic Policy Development Project
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We welcome your questions and comments.

Siobhan Oppenheimer-Nicolau
President
Hispanic Policy Development Project

The Public Agenda Foundation

Last year the Hispanic Policy Development Project asked us to carry out a challenging assignment, one that to our knowledge had not been done before. We were asked to conduct a national study of elected and appointed Hispanic officials. In June and July interviews were conducted with 448 Hispanic officials, drawn from all levels of government and from each of the major Hispanic subgroups: Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and "other Hispanics." They were asked about the obstacles facing the Hispanic community, its opportunities, and the outlook for the 1980s.

Despite frequently voiced concern about a lack of common cause among Hispanic groups, we found a surprisingly high level of agreement among respondents about priority concerns for the entire Hispanic community. The first report summarizing the results of this study, Volume I, Moving Into the Political Mainstream, focuses on one of those concerns, the as yet unrealized political potential of Hispanics. The second report, Volume II, Moving Up To Better Education and Better Jobs, focuses on the other priority concern so frequently expressed in these interviews. In the estimation of these officials, unemployment and underemployment are at the top of the list of problems facing Hispanics today. Our interviews shed a good deal of light on what Hispanic officials believe to be contributing factors, the role education plays in perpetuating the problem, and what needs to be done to improve matters.

Many of these officials agreed that the very fact that so little information about Hispanics is available to policy makers is itself a serious problem. Studies such as this can help alleviate that problem. What these officials express is a matter of great concern not only to the more than 15 million mainland Hispanics, but also to that much broader group of citizens who want to know more about the nation's fastest growing minority group. We think that the two reports which summarize the study's results should contribute to a better understanding of this unique and increasingly important segment of the U.S. population.

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CONTENTS

Study Design and Methodology 7

Unrealized Political Potential 9

How Serious Is Low Voter Turnout? 11

What Barriers Have Kept Hispanics from Realizing Their Political Potential? 12

Which Institutions Best Serve the Hispanic Community? 14

Outlook for the Future 15

Appendix i

- A. Composition of the Sample i
- B. Introductory Letter i
- C. Survey Results ii
- D. "For Further Information" vi

1.
Study Design and Methodology

Early in 1983, the Hispanic Policy Development Project called on the Public Agenda Foundation—a non-profit, nonpartisan research and education organization—to conduct a national survey of elected and appointed Hispanic officials in the United States. Our goal was to probe the concerns of Hispanic officials at various levels of responsibility and from various regions of the country, and to explore their perceptions of the chief problems facing Hispanics in the 1980s.

The Sample

Our sample of 448 Hispanics—all former or current elected or appointed officials—was drawn from lists compiled by the National Council of La Raza, based on information provided by the National Association of Elected and Appointed Officials, state governments, and state political parties. The sample includes a Member of the U.S. Congress, state legislators, city council members, school board officials, magistrates, and county sheriffs, clerks, treasurers, assessors, and other local office-holders. It was drawn from nine states which together include some 88.7 percent of the nation's Hispanic population as defined by the 1980 Census:

	Total Hispanic Population (000)	Percent of Total Hispanic Population	Percent of Hispanic Leaders in Sample
California	4,066	31	12
Texas	3,531	27	30
New York	1,927	14	7
Florida	1,048	8	3
New Mexico	595	4	24
New Jersey	535	4	1
Arizona	531	4	9
Illinois	671	5	2
Colorado	381	3	12
	13,285	100	100

In addition to the fact that there were far more males in our sample than females (361 males compared to 76 females), our sample differed from the Hispanic population as a whole in another respect. Whereas only about 40 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population was born in this country, fully 92 percent of our sample was born here.

Sample Composition by Ethnic Background

While every effort was made to include in our sample officials from each of the various Hispanic subgroups, because the ranks of elected and appointed officials do not reflect the numerical importance of each of these subgroups, they are not represented proportionately in this study. Here, according to country of descent, is the composition of our sample:

Sample Compositions by Country of Descent

	Number	Percentage
Mexico	231	52
Puerto Rico	35	8
Cuba	18	3
Spain	66	15
Other	98	21
	448	100

Although special efforts were made to locate Hispanic officials from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, two groups are underrepresented. While Puerto Ricans represent 15 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population, Puerto Rican officials comprise only 8 percent of this sample. Similarly, while Cubans

represent some 7 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population, Cubans comprise just 3 percent of our survey respondents.

The disproportionately high number of Mexican Americans in the sample can be attributed in part to their residence in towns and small cities in the Southwest which offer more opportunities for government service than do large cities. On a proportional basis, fewer residents of Los Angeles or New York City hold elective or appointive office compared to those who live in New Mexico, Colorado, or West Texas. That the ratio of Chicano officials to the size of that group is higher than the ratio for Puerto Ricans reflects, in other words, the size of the towns and cities in which these groups live as much as it reflects the effectiveness of their political organizations.

The Questionnaire

An introductory letter was mailed to prospective respondents in April 1983, describing the purpose of the study and the fact that it was being conducted for the Hispanic Policy Development Project.

Telephone interviews, based on a structured questionnaire, were conducted in May, June, and July, 1983. These interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each. Most of them took place during business hours.

2.
Unrealized Political Potential

As the 1984 election season begins, an unprecedented amount of attention is being devoted to the great political potential of America's most rapidly growing minority. Both parties are mounting major campaigns to win the hearts and votes of Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Hispanic groups. Hispanics are beginning to see the potential of their numbers, especially in those six states—California, Texas, New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois—that cast about three-fifths of the 270 electoral votes required to elect a President. As Toney Anaya, a Mexican-American who is the new Governor of New Mexico, recently said, "It appears to me that we have become a crucial group, not only in the presidential process, but in many areas of the country at all levels of electoral politics."

The occasion for that remark was a meeting held in August 1983 in San Antonio, at which some 200 Hispanic Americans convened to open a national nonpartisan drive to persuade their people to vote. While many of the speakers at that conference referred to disappointing Hispanic voter turnout in the past, the main emphasis was on the great potential that Hispanics might realize in 1984. That sentiment was shared by many of the elected and appointed Hispanic officials interviewed for this study. As one man, a Puerto Rican who is a New York City Councilman, put it, "Hispanics today are right on the threshold. We're ready to make a breakthrough on all levels—local, state, and federal. We are so close we can almost taste it."

Yet for all the considerable political potential of this group, the experience of the past decade shows that the potential has been slow to develop and hard to realize. Despite the fact that there are now more than one and one-half million Hispanic citizens of voting age in California, the great majority of them Chicanos, they are still commonly referred to as "the invisible minority." In Los Angeles, where Chicanos make up about a third of the city's population, and where half the kindergarten students have Spanish surnames, there is no Mexican-American on the city council. Despite the fact that Hispanics comprise about ten percent of the state's voting age population, there are only seven Chicanos among the 120 members of the state legislature.

There are some states where Hispanics hold a great deal of political power. In New Mexico, where people of Spanish ancestry played an important role in governance long before it became a state in 1912, Hispanic officials are today both visible and powerful. In addition to Governor Anaya, two of the state's three Congress Members are Hispanic, as are 33 of the state's 112 state legislators. It is estimated that some 70 percent of eligible Hispanic voters went to the polls last year when Mr. Anaya was elected.

If what has happened in New Mexico shows the potential of Hispanics, the situation in New York City shows how far Hispanics have to go to develop their political strength. Two-thirds of eligible Hispanics in New York City—some 400,000 people—are unregistered. Hispanics in New York City have lower voter participation rates than any of the city's other ethnic groups. In fact, according to Richard C. Wade, an urban historian at the City University of New York, Hispanic voter participation rates are lower than those of any ethnic group in the city's history at a similar point in their development.

"Hispanics in the United States have traditionally been underinformed and underinvolved," as former federal official Santiago Rodriguez put it several years ago. "Hispanics have wielded relatively little political power, lacked major national organizations, possessed no lobbying strength and exerted only a minimum national visibility."

Nor is the record of the past three presidential elections encouraging. In 1972, Census reports estimated that 38 percent of eligible Hispanics voted; in 1976 the percentage had declined to 32 percent. By 1980, Hispanic voting had dropped still further to

about 30 percent—compared to about a 60-percent turnout for Anglos and a 50-percent turnout for Blacks.

In the 1982 midterm elections, however, there was a significant upturn in Hispanic voter turnout in some industrial areas such as New Jersey and northern Illinois, as well as Hispanic strongholds such as Texas and New Mexico. As the 1984 election approaches, and many Hispanic leaders put their efforts behind voter registration drives, the question is whether gains such as those registered by Hispanics in some areas of the country in 1982 can be made nationwide. What these 448 officials said when we talked with them early in the summer of 1983 sheds a good deal of light on the obstacles which have kept Hispanics out of the political mainstream, and on what can be done about those obstacles.

3.
How Serious Is Low Voter Turnout?

Low Hispanic Voting Rates Are a Major Concern to All Hispanic Leadership Groups

- Asked to rank some 21 problems in their order of importance to Hispanics, elected and appointed officials from each of the major Hispanic sub-groups indicated that low voting participation rates are one of the top three concerns.
- Overall, 68 percent of our sample regarded this as either a "serious" or a "very serious" concern.
- Low voting rates among Hispanics are regarded as a far more serious problem by Puerto Ricans than by other Hispanics. Seventy-six percent of the Puerto Ricans saw this as a "very serious" problem, compared to 44 percent of the Chicanos and 38 percent of the Cubans. Puerto Ricans feel that this is the single most important problem facing Hispanics today—even more important than unemployment.
- Younger Hispanic officials (those under 35) are far more concerned about low voting participation than those over 50.

The Officials' Comments

- Many Hispanic officials feel strongly about this problem. In the words of one man, a Puerto Rican who serves on the New York State Supreme Court: "We've got to make Hispanics aware of just how much they have to gain from voting. We've got to make them aware that their votes **do** matter, that there is strength in numbers."
- In response to many of the questions in this survey, Puerto Rican officials felt problems to be more severe than their Chicano or Cuban counterparts considered them to be. But this pattern is most clearly visible on the question of whether low voting rates are a serious concern.

Several respondents offered similar explanations of why voting rates are lower among Puerto Ricans than among other Hispanics. One man, an advisor in the mayor's office in New York City, put it this way. "[Puerto Ricans] feel that they are here as transients. Because of that, there's no reason to get involved. Because they think they are only going to be here for a while, they don't think of legislation as being important to them."

That explanation is supported by the results of a 1981 study of the Hispanic population, conducted for the Spanish International Network (SIN—Spanish language television) by Yankelovich, Skelly and White. That study found that while Mexicans and Cubans feel separated from their countries of origin, and share a commitment to living in the United States, many Puerto Ricans (who are U.S. citizens) appear to feel more like visitors on the mainland. Many intend eventually to return to Puerto Rico to live permanently.

Which Are the Most Serious Problems Facing Hispanics?

(Percentage of Respondents Who Feel That This Is a Serious Problem)

1. Hispanic Unemployment 73%
2. Low Hispanic Voting Rates 68%
3. Undocumented Workers 64%
4. Hispanic Education 62%
5. Lack of Information About Hispanics . . . 61%

4.
What Barriers Have Kept Hispanics from Realizing Their Political Potential?

In several questions, we asked Hispanic officials to name barriers to increasing their political influence. **We found little support for three factors commonly regarded as substantial barriers:**

Discriminatory Voting Practices—Of the various reasons suggested to explain low Hispanic voter participation rates, the one regarded as significant by the **smallest** number of respondents was discriminatory voting practices. Despite the fact that until recent redistricting, gerrymandering was widespread in parts of the Southwest, fewer than a quarter of the respondents considered this an important reason for low voter turnout, while almost half appeared to dismiss its importance entirely.

A Characteristically Hispanic Tradition of Individualism or Self-Reliance—It is commonly assumed that one reason Hispanics have not been influential in government and politics is a cultural heritage that stresses individualism and self-reliance, a traditional preoccupation with family and community affairs rather than broad political issues. This factor was regarded by very few of these Hispanic officials as a significant explanation for low voting rates.

Differences Among Hispanic Groups That Prevent Political Cooperation—As one of our respondents put it, "Hispanic groups may mix, but they don't blend. We may all speak Spanish, but that's about where it stops in terms of being alike, or being able to work together. And that has kept us from exercising much political influence." Although various officials expressed concern about being a minority fractured into subgroups, relatively few (27 percent) consider this a very serious problem. Most agree that while this may be a more substantial barrier than discriminatory voting practices or a tradition of self-reliance, it doesn't account for low voter turnout. On this point, however, there are significant differences among Hispanics. While others are not inclined to regard this as a very serious problem, 45 percent of the Puerto Rican officials do.

Five Reasons for Low Hispanic Voting Rates

There was substantial agreement, however, about several factors that may explain why Hispanic voting rates have been so low. These five factors are the ones considered by at least a majority of the respondents to be important.

• The Feeling that Voting Won't Make a Difference

The chief obstacle Hispanic officials say they face is the need to convince their people that political participation can make a difference. In both structured and unstructured questions designed to specify the reasons for low political involvement among Hispanics, we got the same responses: the single greatest cause of low voting participation rates is a widespread feeling that votes simply won't make any difference. As one man, a Mexican American who is a member of a city council in southwest Texas put it, "What we really have to sell is the idea that voting **does** have an effect on what happens in the future."

• A Lack of Political Information

A widespread sense that voting won't make a difference is coupled with another problem, a lack of political information. "It is this combination that beats us," a Puerto Rican who directs one of the units in New York City's Department of Social Services said. "Too many of our people don't understand the electoral pro-

cess. And they don't realize how voting can change things." This was considered by the Hispanic officials we interviewed as the second most important reason for low voter turnout. Overall, our female respondents were more likely to cite this as a "very important reason" (62 percent compared to 40 percent for males), and Puerto Ricans considered this a more pressing problem than other Hispanic officials.

• A Lack of Qualified Political Organizers and Leaders

Third on this list of factors that explain low voter turnout is one that comes close to home for the officials we interviewed. As one man, a Chicano who is a member of the city council in Alice, Texas, put it, "We never had the civil rights battles, and as a result haven't had the leaders those confrontations brought to the forefront. What Hispanics need today is charismatic leaders. By and large, we haven't had candidates who can move people."

Important Reasons for Low Hispanic Voting Rates

The feeling that voting won't make a difference	73%
A lack of political information	68%
A lack of qualified political organizers and leaders	65%
Poor education of Hispanics	59%
Distrust of government	55%

• Poor Education of Hispanics

Overall, some six out of 10 of the officials in our sample said that the relatively low educational level of Hispanics is an important reason for low voter turnout. This is a factor that particularly concerned the Mexican Americans in our study. Cubans considered it a far less pressing concern. Voting studies have shown that education, together with age, is the best predictor of whether someone will vote. So, as indicated by the Census Bureau's Current Population survey, it is highly significant that only 45 percent of Hispanics aged 25 and older have graduated from high school, compared to 70 percent of all Americans in that age group. It is equally significant that younger Hispanics are catching up. Among those aged 25 to 34, 57 percent had completed high school, and 24 percent had completed at least one year of college.

• Distrust of Government

Closely related to the feeling that voting won't make a difference is a feeling of mistrust in government, which was cited by a clear majority of each Hispanic subgroup **except** the Puerto Ricans as an important reason for low voter turnout; 42 percent of the Puerto Rican officials regarded it as an important reason.

Lack of Political Cooperation Among Hispanic Groups

Seen as "A Very Serious Problem"

Total Sample	27%
Puerto Ricans	45%
Mexican Americans	32%
Cubans	16%

• Why Hispanics Don't Vote: the Outlook for Change

A recent study of why Americans vote, conducted jointly by ABC News and the John F. Kennedy School of Public Policy, came to this conclusion about non-voters: "Many people don't vote because they do not see voting as a means of influencing the direction of government. They feel cut off from and unrelated to the system, and therefore unobliged to it."

It would appear from the answers to this question that many of the officials we talked to think that Hispanics feel cut off from government, and that they lack not only political information but also confidence in government itself. If this is so, the hurdle Hispanic leaders face is to convince their people that political participation can make a difference.

5.
Which Institutions Best Serve The Hispanic Community?

One of the things we wanted to determine was which institutions are perceived as serving the Hispanic community well, and which are not. We read a list of twelve types of institutions—including churches, charities, and government institutions; Hispanic and non-Hispanic organizations; and local, regional, and national institutions—to Hispanic officials, and asked them to rate these institutions. Most of the ratings fell in the middle range, indicating moderate satisfaction. Several institutions stood out as most responsive to the Hispanic community, and three stood out as notably unresponsive. From best to worst, here is the list of institutions, and the percentage of Hispanic officials who said that Hispanics are well served by them:

Percentages Indicating that Hispanics Are Well Served by Various Institutions

Churches	61%
Hispanic Media	51%
Hispanic Civil Rights Organizations	43%
Public Schools	37%
Local Governments	35%
Unions	31%
State Governments	26%
Charitable Organizations	26%
Federal Government	24%
Mainstream Media	17%
Non-Hispanic Civil Rights Organizations	16%
Corporations	13%

• The Best and the Worst

The two institutions that stand out as most responsive to the Hispanic community are the churches and the Hispanic media, both of which are regarded by a majority of our respondents as serving it well. At the other end of the spectrum, two of the **least** responsive institutions were the corporations and the mainstream media, which were judged by a majority of our respondents (58 percent and 52 percent respectively) as serving the Hispanic community poorly.

• The Discontent of Puerto Rican Officials

There are several notable differences among Hispanic subgroups in the assessments of institutions. Puerto Ricans are far more critical of trade unions than other Hispanics; 60 percent of them feel that unions serve them poorly. Similarly, they are much more critical of the government, on all levels. Sixty percent of the Puerto Rican sample indicated that they are poorly served by the federal government, in contrast to 39 percent of the sample as a whole. Two institutions regarded as least responsive by Hispanic officials in general—the mainstream media and the corporations—were severely criticized by Puerto Rican officials. Seventy-nine percent felt that Hispanics are poorly served by the mainstream media and fully 90 percent felt the same way about corporations.

• Disgruntlement with Government

The high level of discontent with government is worth noting—particularly at the state and federal level. Nearly four out of 10 of our respondents felt poorly served by government at both state and federal levels.

6.
Outlook for the Future

In response to many questions on this survey, Hispanic officials dwelt on real problems still facing Hispanics. Yet when we asked about their outlook for the future, their responses were decidedly upbeat.

• Prospects for Hispanics over the Next Decade

Asked about prospects for Hispanics over the next ten years, a very high percentage of the officials we interviewed—from every Hispanic subgroup, from liberals and conservatives alike, and from leaders in all age groups—expressed the sentiment that the outlook for Hispanics is favorable. Seventy-nine percent indicated that prospects for Hispanics over the next decade are either "good" or "excellent." As one man, a Mexican American legislator serving in Washington, put it, "We're beginning to see a lot of progress." Judging by the responses to this question, the overwhelming majority of Hispanic officials expect that progress to continue.

• Comparative Prospects

When asked to compare Hispanic prospects with those of other minorities, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of these officials indicated that the prospects for Hispanics are better. Only five percent feel that Hispanic prospects are worse than those of other minorities. Even among that relatively small group who feel that Hispanic prospects for the next decade are not very good, nearly half feel that Hispanics are likely to fare better than other minorities.

• Which Hispanic Group Enjoys the Best Prospects?

While there was an understandable inclination for officials from each of the three main Hispanic groups to express the greatest optimism for their own group's prospects, the over-all sentiment was that Chicanos enjoy the brightest prospects. As a Puerto Rican jurist said, "Chicanos are coming up fast. They have the numbers. And they have the advantage of being concentrated in the Southwest. As a result, it's easier for them to get elected to office. Meanwhile, Puerto Ricans here in the East don't yet have the numbers, and we're still spinning our wheels." In the words of a Mexican American from Edinburg, Texas: "I think we're finally learning to work together toward a common goal."

• Reasons for Optimism

Among the comments these officials made were frequent references to the fact that traditional patterns and stereotypes are breaking down. One Puerto Rican, serving as a New York City official, said, "People are beginning to realize that we don't all live in the South Bronx, drive a Chevy, and drink beer." In the words of a Hispanic city commissioner in Las Vegas, New Mexico, "We've come a long way. We've finally penetrated the mainstream—both politically and financially."

• Time Is on Our Side

"The most encouraging sign of all," as one of our respondents put it, "is demographics." There are two respects in which the demographics may indeed lead to growing political influence. First is the increasing size of the Hispanic community as a percentage of the entire American population, projected to rise from the 1980 level of 6.4 percent to about 9 percent over the next 15 years. Second is the median age of the Hispanic population. The median age of Hispanics is now 23, lower than that of the Black population, which is 25, and much lower than that of the white population, which is 31. Even with relatively high fertility rates, the median age of Hispanics is expected to climb by the year 2000 to between 27 and 29 years. Since in general older citizens vote more regularly than young adults, Hispanic voting rates are likely to improve as a natural function of demographic trends. "Especially in politics, numbers are the name of the game," as one New York Puerto Rican put it. "As Hispanics grow in number, we're going to grow in influence."

A Potential for Consensus

It is frequently asserted that the goal of Hispanic unity and real political strength is likely to remain elusive because of the fundamental differences among Hispanic groups. U.S. Hispanics are many distinct and in some respects diverse groups, consisting not only of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans, but also others from Central and South America, particularly the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. In their 1981 survey of the U.S. Hispanic population, Yankelovich, Skelly and White found that more than six out of 10 Hispanics perceived important differences between Hispanic groups. The hope of a common identity and a single political program for Hispanics often seems elusive in the face of those differences.

So we examined the results of this survey to determine whether the Hispanic community seems seriously divided by those ethnic differences.

Leaving the Old Country Behind

Not long ago Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre, a Puerto Rican, stated that it's time for Hispanics in this country to leave behind the politics of their old countries. "Rather than concentrating on Puerto Rican statehood," he said, "Hispanics should get more serious about immediate problems." Judging by the results of this survey, Puerto Rican officials are inclined to do just that. Compared to the major issues of education, unemployment, and voting participation, the issue of Puerto Rican independence or statehood ranked quite low as a priority. This seems to suggest that Hispanic officials from different groups will be able to come together with a common list of priorities.

Few Real Differences On Policy Priorities

On some 21 problem areas discussed in these interviews, we found a high level of agreement about policy priorities. Among the problems defined as the four most serious issues facing Hispanics today, three issues—education, unemployment, and low voting rates—appeared on all three lists. On many of the issues examined in this study, there were greater differences along political or demographic lines than between the representatives of various Hispanic subgroups. It would appear, in other words, that there is real potential for consensus among Hispanic groups about a common political agenda.

There Is Substantial Agreement About The Main Problems Facing Hispanics

The most serious problems as perceived by:

Ranking of Problems	Mexican Americans	Puerto Ricans	Cubans
	1. Undocumented Workers	1. Low Voter Participation	1. U.S. Relations with Cuba
	2. Unemployment	2. Unemployment	2. Education
	3. Low Voter Participation	3. Education	3. Low Voter Participation
	4. Education	4. Lack of Political Cooperation Among Hispanic Groups	4. Unemployment

Appendix

A. Composition of the Sample

Age

Under 35	20%
35-49	50%
50-64	27%
Refused	3%

Gender

Male	83%
Female	17%

Education

Graduate Degree or Law Degree	22%
College Graduate	22%
Some College	32%
High School Graduate	20%
Some High School or Less	4%

Political Affiliation

Liberal	28%
Conservative	20%
Middle of the road	48%
Other	2%
Don't know	2%

Country of Birth

U.S.	92%
Outside U.S.	8%

Country of Descent

Mexico	53%
U.S.	18%
Spain	15%
Puerto Rico	8%
Cuba	3%
Other	3%

Religion

Catholic	86%
Protestant	6%
Other	5%
None	2%
Refused	1%

B. Introductory Letter

Hispanic Policy Development Project

April _____, 1983

Your name has been selected from a national list of elected Hispanic officials for possible participation in a study sponsored by the Hispanic Policy Development Project.

The objective of HPDP is to provide policymakers with accurate, unbiased data on the Hispanic population so that policy decisions—crucial to the well-being and future productivity of this growing population—can be made on facts rather than stereotype, ignorance, or indifference.

This is *not* an academic study. With your help, we hope to broaden the knowledge of the non-Hispanic leader-

ship about Hispanic problems and concerns, as well as increase Hispanic participation in the policymaking process.

Within the next several weeks, you may be contacted by telephone for a 20-minute interview which will deal with your attitudes and opinions on the major issues and problems faced by the Hispanic population. The study results will be strictly confidential, and no respondent will be quoted by name in any of the published reports.

The findings of the study will be published as a series of booklets which will be disseminated to policymakers across the country, and all materials will of course be made available to study participants.

In accordance with our survey methodology, we are selecting a random sample of respondents from our leadership list. If you are contacted, we very much appreciate the time from your busy schedule, and we thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Siobhan Oppenheimer-Nicolau
President

C. Survey Results

1. Taking into account all the different groups in the U.S. Hispanic population, how do you feel about the prospects for Hispanics as a whole over the next decade? Do you feel that their prospects are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

   a. Excellent 31%
   b. Good 48%
   c. Fair 18%
   d. Poor 2%
   e. Not sure/Don't know 1%

2. Compared with other minority groups, how would you rate the prospects for Hispanics as a whole—would you say the prospects for Hispanics are better, worse, or about the same?

   a. Better 65%
   b. About the same 30%
   c. Worse 5%
   d. Not sure/Don't know 0%

3. Overall, what would you say is the *single* most crucial problem facing Hispanics today? **(UNAIDED)**

   Education 35%
   Jobs 24%
   Lack of Political Involvement 11%
   Lack of Hispanic Unity 11%
   Racial Discrimination 7%
   Other 12%

4. I'm going to read a list of issues that affect many Hispanics in the U.S. today. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the issue on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" means that you feel this is a very serious problem, and "1" means that you feel that this is not a problem at all. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Hispanic unemployment rates	73%
b. Issue of Puerto Rican statehood or independence	18%
c. U.S. relations with Cuba	46%
d. Discrimination against Hispanics on the job	56%
e. The amount of education most Hispanics have	62%
f. Family size among Hispanics	32%
g. Loss of Hispanic traditions	41%
h. Problems *of* undocumented workers	64%
i. Problems *caused by* undocumented workers	50%
j. Newspaper, TV coverage, and movies which are unfair to Hispanics	45%
k. Competition with other minorities for social services	32%
l. Hispanics not wanting to adopt American ways and customs	15%
m. Lack of information about Hispanics available to U.S. policymakers	61%
n. Low Hispanic voting rates	68%
o. Problems with the design of affirmative action programs	44%
p. Lack of political cooperation *within* Hispanic groups	56%
q. Lack of political cooperation *among* Hispanic groups	56%
r. Teenage pregnancy among Hispanics	42%
s. Failure of the administration to support affirmative action programs	57%
t. Lack of political cooperation between Hispanics and other minority groups	43%

u. Problems created for Hispanic workers by the large numbers of Anglo women entering the labor force 23%

5. Which Hispanic group do you think enjoys the brightest prospects for the next decade? **(UNAIDED)**

1. Puerto Ricans 7%
2. Chicanos (Mexican Americans) 61%
3. Cubans 10%
4. Other: Specify_____ 5%
5. No particular group 7%
6. Don't know 10%

6. Which group may have the worst prospects? **(UNAIDED)**

1. Puerto Ricans 21%
2. Chicanos (Mexican Americans) 9%
3. Cubans 26%
4. Other: Specify_____ 16%
5. No particular group 8%
6. Don't know 21%

7. Once in the labor force, many Hispanics seem to be unable to climb the job ladder. For example, only about 8% of Hispanic workers hold professional or managerial jobs vs. 15% for the general population. What in your opinion is the *single greatest obstacle* faced by Hispanics who enter the workplace? **(UNAIDED)**

Education 44%
Discrimination 23%
Lack of Confidence, Assertiveness 13%
Language Barriers 3%
Other 17%

8. I'm going to read a list of reasons that some observers say are responsible for the inability of many Hispanics to move up to better jobs. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the reason on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" is a very important reason, and "1" means that you feel that this is not a reason at all. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

"4" or "5" Rating

a. Discrimination on the job 52%
b. Difficulty with English 42%
c. Ineffective Affirmative Action programs 48%
d. Lack of education 69%
e. Competition with Blacks, Asians, and other minority groups 24%
f. Competition between Hispanics and Anglo women 29%
g. Tendency of many educated Hispanics to enter fields with limited opportunities 37%
h. Lack of job skills 62%
i. Lack of self-confidence 57%
j. Limited expectations and aspirations 47%
k. Not wanting to adopt American ways 16%
l. Slower growth of public employment in areas such as education, hospital service, welfare, and other agencies 33%
m. Feeling that jobs and U.S. residence are "temporary" 18%

9. How effective do you feel Affirmative Action programs have been for lower-income Hispanics? Has Affirmative Action been very effective, somewhat effective, or not very effective at all?

a. Very effective 7%
b. Somewhat effective 56%
c. Not very effective 33%
d. Not sure/Don't know 4%

10. How about for Hispanics at the middle-income level—has Affirmative Action been very effective, somewhat effective, or not effective at all?

a. Very effective 13%
b. Somewhat effective 64%
c. Not effective 19%
d. Not sure/Don't know 4%

11. I'm going to read two statements about the *majority* of undocumented workers. Please indicate which one comes closest to your own view.

a) Undocumented Hispanic workers are filling undesirable jobs that would otherwise remain vacant.

OR

b) Undocumented Hispanic workers are taking jobs away from Americans.

A 66%
B 28%
Not sure/Don't know 5%

12. Nearly two out of five Hispanic youths are entering adulthood without a high school diploma—a dropout rate which exceeds that of Blacks and is more than double that of the Anglo population. In your opinion, what is the *single greatest obstacle* to better education for Hispanics in the U.S. today? **(UNAIDED)**

Lack of parental concern 19%
Financial obstacles 22%
Problems with educational system 21%
Low motivation, confidence 12%

Language barriers 7%
Other 19%

13. I'm going to read a list of reasons given for the high Hispanic dropout rate. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the problem on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" is a very important reason, and "1" means that you feel this is not a reason at all. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Racial discrimination	31%
b. Teenage pregnancy	27%
c. Difficulty with English	35%
d. Too few bilingual programs	41%
e. Too few Hispanic teachers	49%
f. Parents who are uneducated	66%
g. Many students have to work and help support families	50%
h. Lack of special services for children with serious problems	61%
i. Frequent back-and-forth migration to native country	26%
j. Lower expectations and aspirations of Hispanic students	48%
k. Lack of encouragement by parents	61%
l. Too few parochial schools	21%
m. Bad influences of friends and other youths	53%
n. Poor grades of Hispanic students	46%

14. Many different views of bilingual education programs have been expressed by Hispanic educators. I'm going to read a list of statements, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if you agree, or disagree. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure Don't Know
a. Bilingual programs are essential in helping Hispanic children to learn English and to do better in school	83%	16%	1%
b. Bilingual programs are important to maintaining Hispanic traditions	63%	35%	2%
c. Bilingual programs put Hispanic children at a disadvantage because they won't learn English as quickly as they might otherwise	26%	71%	3%
d. Since only a small minority of Hispanic children have serious difficulties with English, bilingual programs may not be worth the effort	24%	73%	3%
e. Bilingual programs will help Hispanic children become more employable	73%	23%	3%
f. Since Hispanics are becoming a very large part of the American population, bilingual programs are equally important for Anglo children	78%	18%	3%

15. Varying degrees of emphasis on English and Spanish have been proposed by various educators. I'm going to read a list of proposals. For each one, please tell me if you agree or disagree. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure Don't Know
a. All classes should be taught in English	49%	49%	2%
b. Basic subjects should be taught in English, with supplementary courses in Spanish	75%	22%	3%
c. Basic subjects should be taught in Spanish, with supplementary courses in English	25%	73%	2%
d. All classes should be taught in Spanish	1%	97%	2%
e. Children should be allowed to choose whether they want to be taught in English or Spanish	21%	76%	3%

16. Parochial schools have been suggested as an alternative to public school education for Hispanic children. Do you feel parochial schools offer higher quality, lower quality, or do they offer about the same quality of education as public schools?

a. Higher quality 45%
b. About the same 42%
c. Lower quality 9%
d. Not sure/Don't know 3%

17. As a Hispanic, do you believe that Hispanics can climb the economic ladder and still retain Hispanic traditions?

a. Yes	94%
b. No	5%
c. Not sure/Don't know	1%

18. In the 1980 Presidential election, only 30% of Hispanics went to the polls, vs. 51% for Blacks and 61% for the Anglo population. What, in your view, is the single greatest cause of low Hispanic voting participation? **(UNAIDED)**

Lack of political information, awareness	31%
Feeling that voting won't make a difference	41%
Failure of political leadership to address Hispanic problems, seek Hispanic support	9%
Lack of Education	6%
Other	14%

19. I'm going to read some possible reasons for the low Hispanic voter participation rate. After I read each one, I'd like you to rate the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where "5" is a very important reason, and "1" means that this is not a reason at all: **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. The feeling on the part of Hispanics that voting will not make a difference	73%
b. Discriminatory voting practices against Hispanics	26%
c. Lack of political information	68%
d. Lack of qualified organizers and leaders	65%
e. Distrust of government	55%
f. Hispanic tradition of self-reliance, and not joining groups	36%
g. Poor education of Hispanics	59%

20. Now I'd like to find out how well you feel various institutions serve the needs of Hispanics. I'm going to read a list of institutions, and I'd like you to rate each one on a scale of 1 to 5. A "5" means that you feel the Hispanic population is very well served by that institution, and a "1" means that Hispanics are very poorly served. **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	"4" or "5" Rating
a. Churches	61%
b. Unions	31%
c. Public Schools	37%
d. Corporations	13%
e. Hispanic newspapers, radio and TV stations	51%
f. Mainstream newspapers, radio and TV stations	17%
g. Charitable organizations	26%
h. Hispanic Civil Rights and Service Organizations	43%
i. Non-Hispanic Civil Rights and Service Organizations	16%
j. Federal government	24%
k. State governments	26%
l. Local governments	35%

21. The Federal government provides many different programs and services. In which areas do you feel Hispanics are *best* served by the Federal government? **(UNAIDED)**

Social Services	34%
Education	13%
Jobs/Job Training	10%
Other areas	43%

22. In which areas do you feel Hispanics are *least* served by the Federal government? **(UNAIDED)**

Education	16%
Jobs	17%
Social Services	10%
Other areas	57%

23. I'm going to read some statements of political interest to many Hispanics. After I read each one, please indicate whether you agree or disagree. **(READ EACH STATEMENT)**

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure Don't Know
a. The U.S. should normalize relations with Cuba	47%	46%	8%
b. Puerto Rico should become our 51st state	50%	31%	19%
c. Puerto Rico should be granted independence	38%	41%	20%
d. Puerto Rico should remain a commonwealth	29%	51%	20%
e. Amnesty should be granted to all undocumented Hispanics residing in the U.S.	38%	55%	7%
f. Families of undocumented Hispanic workers are entitled to the same social services as American citizens	44%	52%	4%
g. The U.S. should make it easier for undocumented Hispanics to work here	45%	52%	3%

D.
"For Further Information..."

Aspira of America, Inc.
114 East Twenty-eighth Street, New York, New York 10016
(212) 889-6101

Aspira is dedicated to the educational and leadership development of Hispanic and other minority youth. Publications include METAS, a journal of research and policy analysis on education and related social issues that affect Puerto Ricans and other minority groups.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus
House Annex 2—Room 557, Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 226-3430

The Caucus is committed to all legislation meeting the needs of Hispanic Americans. It publishes a monthly newsletter, AVANCE.

Cuban American Legal Defense and Education Fund (CALDEF)
130 East Lewis Street, Post Office Box 10538, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802
(219) 422-5539

CALDEF was organized to help Cuban Americans and other Hispanics gain equal treatment and equal opportunity in education, employment, housing, politics, and justice. CALDEF publishes a monthly, THE HISPANIC NEWSLETTER.

Cuban National Planning Council
300 S.W. Twelfth Avenue—Third Floor, Miami, Florida 33130
(305) 642-3484

The Council's purpose is to identify the social, economic, and cultural needs of Cubans in the United States and to assist Cubans in their adjustment to U.S. society. It publishes a number of brochures and position papers.

Hispanic Higher Education Coalition
20 F Street, N.W.—Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 638-7339

The purpose of the Coalition, composed of 13 national organizations, is to improve the participation and support of Hispanics in postsecondary education. It publishes the quarterly HHEC NEWSLETTER.

Institute for Puerto Rican Policy, Inc.
Post Office Box 1146 RCU, New York, New York 10185
(212) 689-6331

The Institute is a policy analysis organization, focusing on the social problems of Puerto Ricans. Publications include an annual report, LATINO VOTER REGISTRATION IN NEW YORK CITY, as well as a quarterly newsletter, DIALOGO.

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
815 Sixteenth Street, N.W.—Suite 707, Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 347-4223

A Hispanic trade union association representing 43 international unions in 80 chapters throughout the United States, LCLAA works to achieve social dignity, economic and political justice, and improved living standards for Hispanic workers. It publishes a newsletter, LA VOZ LATINA, six times a year.

Latino Institute
53 West Jackson Boulevard—Suite 940, Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 663-3603

The Institute provides leadership training for parents and for civic organizations. It also researches community problems, including civil rights, employment, housing, and education. It publishes a variety of materials and a monthly newsletter, TELETIPO.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
2590 Morgan Avenue, Post Office Drawer 5427, Corpus Christi, Texas 78405
(512) 882-8284

The League is the oldest and largest Hispanic organization in the United States, with chapters in every state. It publishes LATINO MAGAZINE and AVISO, a bimonthly newsletter that alerts its membership to legislation or national issues affecting their welfare.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
28 Geary Street—Sixth Floor, San Francisco, California 94108
(415) 981-5800

MALDEF is a national advocacy agency that protects the rights of U.S. Hispanics and works to advance Hispanic communities. It publishes a quarterly, the MALDEF NEWSLETTER.

Midwest Voter Registration Education Project
51 North High Street—Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 464-1116

The Project is a non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing the political participation of Hispanics through education and voter registration. It publishes reports and manuals.

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.—Suite 405, Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-7870

NABE works to publicize quality bilingual curricula in educational programs serving all languages, and to inform

the public about the necessity for such programs. Publications include NABE NEWS, issued five times a year, and NABE JOURNAL, published quarterly.

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)
504 C Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 546-2536

NALEO was established to improve the health and the economic, social, and educational welfare of Hispanics, to inform Hispanic voters about issues affecting them, and to register Hispanic voters. A newsletter, NALEO WASHINGTON REPORT, is issued quarterly.

National Chicano Council on Higher Education
600 West Twenty-eighth Street—Suite 201, Austin, Texas 78705
(512) 479-8497

Dedicated to serving the needs of all sectors of the Chicano higher education community, the Council publishes a monthly newsletter, LA RED/THE NET.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
Twenty F Street, N.W.—Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 628-9600

The Council is a broad-based service organization of 120 affiliated groups. It was chartered to advance the social and economic well-being of Hispanic communities. Publications include policy analyses, statistical summaries, issue briefs, and "Action Alerts" on issues of concern to Hispanics.

National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC)
701 North Fairfax Street—Suite 310, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-0020

The Coalition's primary mission is to foster the social, economic, and political well-being of all Puerto Ricans. NPRC publishes public policy studies and produces a monthly newsletter, NPRC REPORTS.

National Puerto Rican Forum, Inc.
450 Park Avenue South—Eleventh Floor, New York, New York 10016
(212) 685-2311

The Forum is dedicated to the socio-economic development of the nation's Hispanic communities. It concentrates on job training and employment programs, and publishes a variety of materials.

Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (PRLDEF)
95 Madison Avenue—Suite 1304, New York, New York 10016
(212) 532-8470

PRLDEF was created to protect and further the rights of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics. It challenges discrimination in education, voting rights, housing, employment, and health. It's publications include a newsletter, PRLDEF UPDATE.

SER—Jobs for Progress, Inc.
1355 River Bend Drive—Suite 350, Dallas, Texas 75247
(214) 631-3999

SER seeks to serve the economic, social, and educational needs of the nation's Hispanic communities. It publishes a monthly newsletter, SER NETWORK NEWS.

Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
201 North St. Mary's—Suite 501, San Antonio, Texas 78205
(512) 222-0224

The Project is a non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing the political participation of Hispanics through political education and voter registration. It publishes a number of reports, studies, and manuals.

For additional information on Hispanic organizations, see—

- A GUIDE TO HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS, published by Philip Morris U.S.A., Public Affairs Department, 100 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.
- GUIDEBOOK TO HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION, published by ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027.

(Information was extracted from both publications for use in this compilation.)

The Hispanic Policy Development Project

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